

EDITORIAL.

THE AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATIONS are now fairly launched on their way, and their reports are beginning to come in rapidly. Some of them are valuable, some are worthless, evidently having been made to order. It is, perhaps, hardly fair to make such a criticism so early in the history of these stations, but we wish to do them a service if possible. The requirements of a report at certain stated intervals is American, but dreadfully unscientific, and the general supposition is that at these stations, at last, we have endowment for research and not simply one for "reports." If they are to begin at once with reports upon all sorts of hasty and meaningless experiments, we shall be worse off than we were before. We thoroughly understand that many in charge of this work can not perform any other kind of experiments, and concerning these we have nothing to say. But there are those in charge who know how to work, for they have already made a record, and we want to see the opportunity given them. The popular American idea is to experiment two or three weeks, and then write a report, and if real workers are compelled to come under such an order of things, their publication can be but little better than others. We would protest, therefore, against compelling a botanist at one of these stations to write a report when he has nothing to say. He must not be hurried even, for the best experimental work can only be done with the idea of unlimited time as a factor. A station director must know that his man is competent, that he is actually doing work, and then wait patiently for results. The ability to get out a report at short intervals ought to be taken as an indication of a man's incompetency as an investigator. If the requirement of "reports" from the scientific staff of these stations could be removed, and only monographs prepared after ample investigation, our new venture might really prove the beginning of an endowment for research.

CURRENT LITERATURE.

Watson's Contributions to American Botany.

A great herbarium should always be productive, and it is of inestimable advantage to American botanists that our greatest herbarium has always had in it men with the spirit and ability to work. The accumulation of a great herbarium which contributes little or nothing to general botanical knowledge is hardly better than a miser's accumulation of money. The "Contributions" from the Harvard Herbarium form a set of botanical publications that no working botanist can be without, or else he will be working in the dark.

The last of these is before us.¹ The first part is a report of a collec-

¹ WATSON, SERENO.—Contributions to American Botany. xvi. (Proc. Am. Acad. xxiv, pp. 36-87). Issued Jan. 31, 1889.